



ukulele player

The Stars Come Out

The world of ukulele has had some hard knocks in recent times with the loss of John King and John Kavanagh. They will be missed by many people that knew them and played music with them. They inspired many students and others with their contributions to the community of ukulele players world-wide.

If you have not heard, Steve Boisen (The Barnkickers) took the bull by the horns and put together a consortium of players to create a CD for the American Asperger's Association (16 ukulele tracks). There are tracks by Greg Hawkes, Craig Robertson, Ian Whitcolm, The Barnkickers and many more. Buy it, you won't regret it.

I'd like to acknowledge a couple of typos in the last issue's "what's inside..." index. The Kala uke was listed wrong and John Kavanagh should have been listed, not John King. I fixed the issues so anyone wanting to download the corrected copy, please do so.

We re-use some elements of the magazine in the interest of saving time. It takes a lot of work to produce **ukulele player** and I

can work a little more efficiently by doing so.

This issue includes three ukulele reviews. From Ohana, we review the CK-25, a solid mahogany concert uke that sounds great and won't break the bank. From Kala, we feature a spalted maple concert with a solid spruce top. This is the Kala give-away uke. From Oscar Schmidt, we feature the OU-5LCE, a laminated koa uke with great looks and a hot UK-2000 pickup. This is part of their "professional series" and was actually designed with the serious performer in mind.

We have several CD reviews this issue. There are some very talented people out there playing great cover-tunes and writing some great original music. The music scene is not dead, at least not in the world of ukulele. There are some truly talented musicians out there and many songwriters, too.

We have Bliss Blood and the Moonlighters newest CD, "Enchanted". From Miss Jess, we have "Jammin' at Jackson's, what a great lineup of musicians!

Ukulele Jim's "Authentic Down Home Marital Aid" a.k.a. "Snake Oil Music". If you don't know Ukulele Jim, you soon will.

Jim posted some tunes online quite some time ago and I really enjoyed listening to them, now he presents his debut CD and it has a lot of tunes for your listening pleasure.

Finally, Cali Rose' "Are You Having Any Fun?" Cali Rose has one of those genuine smiles that will melt your heart. She loves playing music and it shows.

Coming next issue, an exclusive interview with Bill Tapia and a review of his new CD.

what's inside...

- p2. Bliss Blood & the Moonlighters
- p6. Enchanted CD review
- p8. Oscar Schmidt OU-5LCE
- p9. Oscar Schmidt hardshell cases
- p11. Are You Having Any Fun?
- p12. Digital Recording Pitfalls
- p14. Ohana CK-25 review
- p15. Kala KA-FMC uke review
- p16. Snake Oil Music - review
- p17. Miss Jess
- p19. Rest In Peace, Capt. Google
- p20. Mike DaSilva Luthier Spotlight
- p25. UkeLounge - Steven Sproat
- p26. Kale Uke Give-A-Way
- p27. Club Listings
- p33. What's Happening
- p35. Online Resources



Bliss Blood

I knew who Bliss Blood was and we have actually been MySpace "friends" for a good while now, and I knew about her band, "The Moonlighters" but when putting together this article and accompanying interview, I was blown away by what I found.

Bliss Blood is one of those talented people that never stops working. She is not just the singer-songwriter and founder of The Moonlighters, she also plays music with FOUR other acts.

In no particular order, Bliss sings and plays with The Moonlighters, Delta Dreambox, The Cantonement Jazz Band, Here's How, and Voodoo Suite.

The Moonlighters play 20s and 30s jazz. Delta Dreambox plays Delta Blues, The Cantonement Jazz Band plays 20s jazz. Here's How plays 50s "Cool Jazz", and Voodoo Suite plays "lounge and exotica", no, not erotica... exotica. Think of tropical island paradise music, food, and romance.

Bliss has one of the busiest calendars of any performer I have seen that is not "touring". With her list of engagements, she doesn't have time to tour. She plays the Big Apple and

from the reviews I have read, the people there love her.

This article was really going to be primarily about Bliss and the Moonlighters, but, truthfully, there is so much more to tell.

Bliss Blood began her career in Texas and she made her way East to New York City to pursue the music she grew to love. What I'm going to do is let Bliss tell her story in her own words. So, let's get on with the interview.

We will finish up with a review of The Moonlighters new CD, Enchanted.

Q: How long have you played ukulele?

A: I got my first ukulele in the summer of 1995. It was a Harmony with a plastic fretboard, I got it from a guitar dealer for \$40.00 with a Mel Bay's Chord Book. I am completely self-taught, though working with a bass player really helped me develop into a strong rhythm player.

Someone once compared me to Freddie Green, Count Basie's guitarist, who they called the



"Tie Up" man in the rhythm section. Though now I am also trying to begin playing some simple lead parts and riffs too. I am learning the entire Village Green Preservation Society album by The Kinks, and trying to fill in some of the songs because I'm playing it solo on baritone ukulele.

Q: How many ukes do you have?

A: I recently sold a couple of them. I have a battered Kamaka Concert, a beat up revarnished Martin Tenor, an old Harmony Baritone, a Pohaku custom soprano, a flat body soprano made by Jere Canote, and a old junky Hawaiian souvenir. Not many for a working musician, and most of them are in crappy condition.

WorldSound is working on an endorsement deal for me with Pono Ukuleles in Hawaii, hopefully that will be a done deal soon, I like their ukuleles a lot.

Q: You started your musical career in 1985 with a band called "The Pain Teens". You made a bunch of "tapes". How

many? How well were they received? How would you describe the "Pain Teens" music?

A: The Pain Teens started out as an experimental band using tape collages over music a la "My Life In The Bush Of Ghosts", it was all done by Scott Ayers, my band mate. I joined the band and we began adding vocals of different types and adding more rock music into the mix. Scott was an excellent guitarist and multi-instrumentalist.

We just made home recordings for a couple of years, released a bunch of cassette only releases (nine in total), then started playing out live and releasing our music on LP. After we did two albums on our own label, Anomie Records, we got signed to Trance Syndicate. We did four albums on Trance, a total of six official releases and nine cassette-only releases on Anomie.

All of the Pain Teens music is supposed to be available on iTunes beginning this month. All of the Moonlighters material is already available on iTunes also.

Q: You were signed with King Coffey's label, Trance Syndicate. Did you get a chance to meet the Butthole Surfers?

A: We stayed at King's place in Austin and met the other Surfers for the first time at a club in Houston called Numbers, around 1990 or so. Still write back and forth with King,

friends with Pinkus and Paul Leary on Facebook and Myspace, and see Gibby around New York City occasionally.

I also was fortunate to see their "School of Rock" tour last summer at Webster Hall here in New York. It was great to hear them with Teresa back in the band. I always loved the dual tribal drum sound.

Q: Was Coffey an influence?

A: His tribal drumming, with Teresa in the early years, was a huge influence, as was the crazed psychedelic grunge delayed guitar of Paul Leary and the digital delay soaked surrealist poetry and singing of Gibby. They influenced a whole decade of weirdo bands, certainly lots of the Touch and Go bands, and definitely lots of the bands on Trance.

Q: You headed for New York City in 1996 and started to play Twenties and Thirties jazz and originals. What brought on that switch?

A: Frankly, I was tired of never being heard over all the noise onstage, and tired of Scott monopolizing everything musically and dictating what it sounded like. I always loved Bessie Smith, and I had gotten into Billie Holiday and some other jazz singers and actually done a two-set performance in Houston between tours in 1993 with a piano player, because I was interested in learning to be a really good singer, I was also into Fats Waller and that got me

started loving stride piano and swing. I also acquired a collection of 1920's and 30's music on LP's at the record store where I worked, when someone sold several hundred albums which had obviously been donated by a music lover of that time. So I got a crash course in old music, right when I was learning ukulele, which led to a crash course in chords, modulation into the right key, music theory.

Then a dream project came my way, I'd really been into the compilations of "Reefer Songs" on Stash Records and loved them. I played them for Scott and he couldn't hear anything beyond the surface noise, and didn't like the music, but my friend Danny Lilker from a death metal band called Brutal Truth actually asked me to be the singer on a collection of those same songs played by himself and the members of Exit-13, called "Smoking Songs". I came to Lancaster, PA in August of 1995 and recorded the album with them, it was released in early 1996, my first jazz album. It's actually really well played and funny, and my singing's not bad, though I have come a long way as a vocalist since then.

Q: You kept the "stage name". Have you thought about changing it?

A: No way. I am Bliss Blood, have been since 1985.

Q: You formed "The Moonlighters" in 1998, is that correct?

A: No, actually I met Henry Bogdan (bassist from rock band Helmet) in the summer of 1996. He had gone to Hawaii on tour with them and fell in love with the Hawaiian lap steel guitar music of the 1920's. I had one Sol Hoopii LP so I understood where he was coming from, and we got the idea to combine our influences to create a new style of music, Hawaiian swing. But I had to wait two years, until he quit playing in Helmet in 1998, to start actually playing and writing songs.

Q: Again, you play twenties and thirties jazz numbers and original tunes. Who are the band members?

A: Myself, on uke and vocals, Cindy Ball on guitar and vocals. Cindy, like me, is a total aficionado of 1920's music, language, fashion, and culture. We are currently working with some different lap steel and bass players, no definite lineup right now.

Q: You have a sort of "Goth" image. Have you tried other "looks"? You do carry it off pretty well.

A: I don't think I've looked "Goth" since around 1991 or so, I went from that to sort of a Bettie Page style, and now I sort of combine that with flapper dresses and shoes, and interesting tights and legwear, which is sort of my trademark, I think.

Q: The band consists of a steel player, bassist, guitarist and you

Making beautiful music is your passion, helping you do it is ours.



play ukulele. Do you play anything else?

A: I used to play some saw, slide whistle, stuff like that at first, we were a little more on the "novelty" side, but quickly found we really didn't need that stuff, the main thing is the vocals.

Q: What is the biggest venue you've played with the current band?

A: Das Kurhaus Goggingen in Augsburg, Germany, and also the civic center in Buhl, Germany for their bluegrass festival. They both hold around 1,000 people.

Q: Have you thought about adding a percussionist drummer?

A: I don't like the raise in volume that drums add to the mix. It's better as a string band.

Q: You just released a new album. This is the fifth one. How long did it take to put it together? Did you record it in a studio or with a home studio setup? If you were in a studio, which one?

A: We recorded it at Olive Juice Music, a home studio in Manhattan. It took six days of

tracking and three days of mixing. We worked on the songs and arrangements over a period of about two years.

Q: Do you have any plans to hit the road and tour to promote the CD?

A: I hope so, but not sure where or when at this time.

Q: Tell us about your custom-made ukulele.

A: It was made by Peter Hurney of Berkeley, California. His company is called POHAKU, and it's a great instrument, curly maple back and sides, ebony fretboard, custom red varnished top. Super heavy duty varnish to keep me from scraping it (I play with a hard pick).

Here is the URL...
<http://www.pohakuukulele.com/index.html>

Q: What lies ahead for Bliss Blood, and "The Moonlighters"? Any goals? Dreams?

A: I feel very fortunate because I have been able to support myself solely on playing music since 2001. That was the dream I had when I came to New York from Houston, and it only took me 5 years to achieve. I also play solo around New York, and

play with other groups, notably my 1920's Bessie Smith-style blues band, DELTA DREAMBOX. I play baritone uke in that band.

Now of course, I would love to have my music heard by a wider audience, collaborate with more talented musicians, write more music, learn how to play more instruments... maybe even find the man of my dreams.

But for now, life is good. I'm hoping our new record label, WorldSound, is going to help me achieve some wider recognition and allow the band to travel to more interesting places and meet cool people. Everywhere we do play, people seem to love the music and tell me it makes them happy and gets rid of their anxiety and stress, so we just have to get it out there for more people to enjoy.

Thank you for including me in your magazine, it's a real honor to be acknowledged by you and I hope you like the new cd.

Thank you, Bliss, for taking the time from your busy schedule to do the interview.

Bliss has attached a discography and some other information that our readers might enjoy reading. I'd encourage everyone to check out her website and also MySpace page. There are lots of songs online and video clips to enjoy.

Bliss Blood
<http://www.blissblood.com>

DISCOGRAPHY:

THE MOONLIGHTERS:

Dreamland
Hello Heartstring
Live in Baden Baden
Surrender
Enchanted (check out the review in this issue)

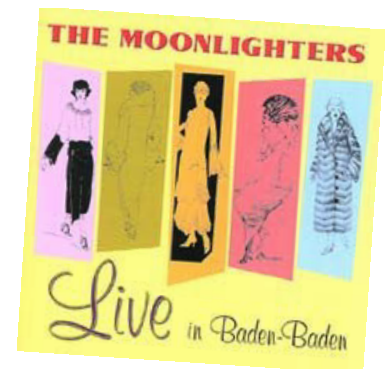
PAIN TEENS:

LPs/CDs
Pain Teens
Case Histories
Born in Blood
Stimulation Festival
Destroy Me, Lover
Beast of Dreams

Cassettes:
Psychoactive
Cathy
Manmade Disasters
Pain Teens IV
King God
Obliviated
Narcolepsy
Dog Spirits
Collective Unconscious
Mythology & You

EXIT-13 with BLISS BLOOD:

Smoking Songs



You can buy the entire collection of The Moonlighters CDs via Bliss Blood's website
<http://www.blissblood.com>



Enchanted - The Moonlighters

Bliss Blood and The Moonlighters recently released their latest CD, "Enchanted" and the best way to describe it is, enchanting.

Here is the song line-up:

1. Enchanted
2. Winter In My Heart
3. Give Me Liberty Or Give Me Love
4. Race Track Papa
5. Don't Cry Baby
6. Fooling with the other Woman's Man
7. Don't Baby Me
8. Sheet Music Man
9. Queen of Loneliness
10. It's Bad For Me
11. Night Smoke
12. One More Time
13. Texarkana Bound
14. I'm Still In Love With You
15. Blue Angel Medley

The album kicks off with a sweet little steel guitar intro. The sound is straight from 20s and 30s jazz and follows the genre through 'til the end.

"Enchanted" is a Bliss Blood original tune. Her love of this genre is evident in her smooth vocals. The musicianship is great and the band has a pretty unique brand of swing.

"Winter In My Heart" sounds like something from an old Bing Crosby flick. Picture Dorothy Lamore singing this one and in comes Der Bingle. Bliss wrote this one, too. She's really captured

that classic sound. This song could have come from the movie classic Holiday Inn.

"Give Me Liberty Or Give Me Love" is a cover tune. The harmonies are unique in this. They grew on me. The more I listen to this track, the more I like the vocal blend. The steel guitar is sweet and Bliss has a rock-solid meter on her rhythm uke.

"Race Track Papa" is another tune that written by Bliss, along with Marty Bartolomeo. This is a fun little tune that starts off slowly and jumps into a swinging rock-a-billy beat. I take that to be inspired by the horse race metaphor... and their off. The song then returns to that campy



sort of beat that it had in the beginning. I really enjoyed this song.

"Don't Cry Baby" is an Unger, Saul, and Johnson cover tune. I love the placement of this song in the lineup. This is a make-up song. Follow it by "Fooling Around With the Other Woman's Man". Looks like Race Track Papa ran off with that young phillie. The harmonies on this tune have a nice vintage vibe to them.

"Don't Baby Me" has a nice little rhythm to it. Cindy Ball, the band's guitarist wrote this song. Bliss plays a really swinging ukulele track in this and the



string bassist laid a great foundation in this song. The beat is wonderful and the band is really tight.

Without that solid beat you can't play a song like this one and make it work. Timing is everything and this song is a great example of doing it right.

"Sheet Music Man" is a song about a piano player just playing the gig.

Way back... 1960s, there was a piano store in New York City and a guy sat there in a tuxedo playing music for several hours a day. I always wondered if the guy was bored just sitting there. I always wondered if he yearned to play some boogie woogie.

"Sheet Music Man" brought that to mind.

"Queen of Loneliness" is another Bliss Blood original tune. Here is another song with a vintage vibe. The steel guitar player adds a nice "lead break" in the middle followed by strong vocal harmonies. This song sounds like something Judy Garland would have sung.

"It's Bad For Me" is a classic tune by the great Cole Porter. If there is one thing this song lacks that the original doesn't it's a baritone male voice. And in this rendition, it isn't missed. I love the vocals here. I am thinking Andrews Sisters.

There is a great steel guitar lead in The Moonlighters' version of this song. The ladies pick up after the lead break with that

signature vocal sound and wrap up the song on a nice note.

"Night Smoke" is the second song on this album written by Cindy Ball. The picture she paints with her lyrics and the mood of the music remind me of Hollywood classic movies. I imagine Humphrey Bogart walking into some cheap gin joint and walking to the bar, the eyes of everyone there watching this stranger cross the floor. The gal at the microphone almost misses her cue and a gentle nudge from the bassist brings her back to the here and now.

"One More Time" is another cover tune. Same gin joint, same dame, same fedora and zoot suite. The music swings and so do the lovers on the dance floor. Now, though, everyone watches as Bogart escorts Bacall out the door.

"Texarkana Bound" Bliss wrote the lyrics on this song. Mike Neer wrote the music.

Somehow, I picture a person with a dream that will be fulfilled in Texarkana. What a fun tune. I love the music. It has a swing beat that picks me up and takes me away to Texarkana.

Bliss and Cindy show what they can do on this number. Their vocals shine. This is what music is all about. You can feel the energy.

If your toes aren't tapping by the end of this number, your feet must be glued to the floor. I love it!

"I'm Still In Love With You" was written by Bliss.

This is another great swing tune. Having this song following Texarkana Bound is an example of perfect placement. I love the chunk, chunk of the ukulele strum and the interplay with the steel guitar. I just wish the bass had been a little higher in the mix. The vocals are great, as usual.

"Blue Angel Medley" is the last track and a good cover to wrap up this wonderful CD.

Don't worry that it's in German. You don't have to worry about not having a clue what the lyrics would be in translation. It's a great tune, whether you know the language or not. Music is the international language and this song is really good music.

If you love the sound of 20s and 30s jazz, you will enjoy this CD and a live performance of this wonderful band.

The Moonlighters really have their act together and now, I just might have to order the whole CD collection.

Bliss and the band are talented musicians and judging from their videos, they take the stage and play from the heart. The crowd seems to love them and you can count me among their fans.

Bliss, thanks for the interview and the CD for this review. I highly recommend it.



Oscar Schmidt OU-5LCE

Oscar Schmidt has been selling ukuleles for a long time. In the ukulele revival, they have the jump on everyone but Kamaka.

Many people have seen and played the OU2 and OU3 "starter ukes" and lots of people bought them as their "first uke".

Oscar Schmidt also has a "professional series" of ukuleles. We featured the OU220SWK last issue and we gave that one to a lucky winner. He sent me a message telling me how impressed he was with it once he had it in his hands.

Unlike the OU220SWK, which was solid mahogany, this issue's featured Oscar Schmidt uke, the OU-5LCE is laminated Hawaiian Koa.

The OU-5LCE is one of the "professional series ukes and is designed with the serious performer in mind. The body is laminated but it is beautifully constructed and has abalone and ivory binding. The rosette is also abalone. The koa laminate is fine straight grain and the color is really pretty.

The neck on this model is "nyatoh" and has nineteen frets. Essentially, it is a concert-bodied uke with a tenor neck. The frets are perfectly dressed

and the action is low and fast. There are round inlay dots in the neck marking the fifth, seventh, tenth, twelfth, and fifteenth frets.

The fretboard is rosewood and the bridge appears to be ebony. The nut and saddle are ABS plastic.

The body of this ukulele has a satin finish and the fit is perfect. Every seam is nicely joined and the neck is very comfortable in my hands. The headstock is the traditional Oscar Schmidt shape and the same one you'll find on the OU2 and OU3, but the OU-5, OU-6, OU-5LCE, and OU-6LCE have open-geared Grover tuners. I really like the feel of them. They are very precise and make tuning easy.

There are two things that really appeal to me as a recording and performing musician. I love the cut-away body style and would like to see more of them in every maker's stable. I also think that all makers need to have more ukuleles in their lineup with nice pickups.

The OU-5LCE has a UK-2000 pickup with volume, treble and bass controls. Unplugged, the uke sounds mellow and sweet. Plugged, this ukulele has fantastic tone. It sounds great finger-picking or strumming.



Oscar Schmidt's professional line of ukes come with Aquila strings, which produce more than enough sound when played acoustically and sound great when plugged into recording equipment or an acoustic amplifier.

The OU-5LCE is a great ukulele for recording projects and working musicians. I love it.

Protect Your Investment With An Oscar Schmidt Hardshell Case

The Oscar Schmidt OU-5LCE is a great ukulele for performing musicians. Even though it is designed to be played hard, you still want a nice case to keep it protected when you are on your way to the gig.

Oscar Schmidt makes a whole line of deluxe hardshell cases for your precious cargo.

If you have the OU220SWK (concert sized), you would want to order the UC-3. The case is sturdy and features three rugged snaps, a keylock, a thick padded handle, and a small storage compartment for tuner or other items.

The OU-5LCE is a concert-bodied uke, but, it has a neck the size of a tenor. For that uke, the UC-4 is a perfect fit.

The UC-4 has the same basic features as the UC-3, but the padded interior is thicker to accommodate the heavier body of a tenor uke. That is why it still fits extremely well with the OU-5LCE. You can see in the picture below that the uke fits pretty well within the case and since I have stored the uke in it long enough now, you will notice that the strings have left an impression in the padded lid of the case. Notice, too, the padding above the neck rest.

That is a great design feature and is something I'd like to see in more hardshell ukulele cases. There is no flimsy velcro strap around the neck of the uke. This padded neck support holds the ukulele safely in place.

I like the fact that the uke does not slide around inside the case like some other ukulele and case combinations I have.

Even though Oscar Schmidt cases have their brand name on them, I have no gripes about carrying any other uke in them. They are great protection and worth every penny. I haul other brands of ukuleles in mine and they always arrive safely.

The UC-3 is \$60 at Musician's Friend. Give 'em a look.



Wild Child Embroidery Made Our Hats!

Chuck Wilson of Wild Child made the **ukulele player** hats you see on the right.

These hats have our magazine logo embroidered on a high-quality ball cap. They look great and feel comfortable.

We have kicked around the idea of offering them for sale, so, We'd like your feedback. Are you interested? If so, we can work out the details with Chuck and make them available to the general public.

Until now, we have only used them for promotional purposes, so, not many people have them. But Chuck did such a fantastic job and they look absolutely fabulous!

Meanwhile, if you want hats for your club, your festival, or your band, talk with Chuck.

Wild Child totally ROCKS!!!

You can tell us what you think at the download page for the magazine.

Send us your comments on the form at the bottom of the download page.

BTW... Chuck makes the "Uke Thong" you see in the picture on the right.

We will give away a Uke thong to one lucky winner in this issue. If you have entered one contest here, you are in them all.



The Barnkickers - Steve Boisen and Amanda in **ukulele player** hats.



Wild Child Embroidery
816-822-9829

chuck15@mindspring.com
<http://home.mindspring.com/~chuck15/>

Custom orders from 1 to 1000



Cali Rose - Are You Having Any Fun?

Are You Having Any Fun? That's what Cali Rose wants to know. At least, that's the title track of her latest CD.

The CD features Cali Rose on vocals and playing a combination of finger-pickin' style uke and strumming accompaniment. Here is the song line-up:

1. Are You Having Any Fun
2. OO-Koo-Lay-Lay
3. True Love
4. Beautiful, Beautiful Hanalei
5. Soup Du Jour
6. Happy Ever After? No Such Ting
7. Beautiful Dreamer
8. Princess Poo-Poo-Ly
9. On Green Dolphin Street
10. Home Is Where I Set My Tushie Down
11. The Fishin' Hole (from the Andy Griffith TV show)
12. Maui Nights
13. Aren't You Glad You're You
14. Enjoy Yourself
15. Let Me Call You Sweetheart

"Are You Having Any Fun?" is a light little ditty that is summed up well with the title. This is a cute tune. Actually, the lyrics are really sage advice matched with a lively beat and solid rhythm.

"OO-Koo-Lay-Lay" This is a song about that "tiny little git-fiddle we all love to play so much. Is it a baby guitar? Is it a fiddle? No, it's an oo-koo-oo-koo-oo-koo-oo-koo-lay-lay. A silly, fun song.

"True Love" A classic song that features finger-picking ukulele style. Cali Rose sings this one in a mellow, alto that couldn't get any smoother no matter

how you try. Followed by "Beautiful, Beautiful Hanalei". This is a dreamy combination of music and vocals. I love the instrumentation in this latter tune in particular. It is the perfect compliment for Cali Rose's silky vocal on this song. Beautiful, indeed. The Steel guitar on this song is superb.

"Soup Du Jour" The intro in this song is sweet, great pickin... great style. This is another sultry song that is destined to be a classic and it was written by Jim Beloff and Herb Ohta. What a wonderful tune.

"Happy Ever After, No Such Ting" is another Cali Rose original. Nice melody and great little intro. Rick Cunha is singing backup vocal on this song. The song features "Tahitian Uke". I'd love to hear this song with a Reggae beat. It flirts with it as recorded here, but I can hear this in "Cocktail" or a similar movie.

"Beautiful Dreamer" is the Stephen Foster classic. I like the instrumental interlude in the middle - for lack of a better term. The ukulele sounds very sweet and mellow in this song.

"Princess Poo-Poo-Ly" is a cute little song about Pooly and her papaya. It's another little happy tune.

"On Green Dolphin Street" This song has another nice intro and picking throughout. This is a jazzy number that reminds me of something you'd hear in the Chicago jazz venue.

"Home Is Where I Set My Tushie Down" is a cute song. Clever lyrics. This is a fun song. I can't help but smile when I listen to it.

"The Fishin' Hole" is classic Sixties television. If you've ever watched the



Andy Griffith show, you probably remember it.

"Maui Nights" I love the intro to this song. This is some nice ukulele playing. The vocals are perfect for this song. The steel guitar is dreamy and the entire song is ethereal. This song features Craig Brandau on ukulele.

"Aren't You Glad You're You" written by Heusen and Burke. Here is another song about enjoying life. It's a feel good song. Nice "chunk-a-chunk" rhythm. There's a little "scat" singing in this... just a touch. Nice work Cali Rose.

"Enjoy Yourself" is another cover tune. It has another upbeat rhythm. Nice little tune.

The CD wraps up with the classic song "Let Me Call You Sweetheart". Nice picking.

Cali Rose shows her versatility with this CD. She strums, picks, and sings her way into your heart with a combination of fun little ditties, love songs, and a few classics.

I love "True Love", "Beautiful, Beautiful Hanalei", and "Soup Du Jour". Those three songs were just wonderful.

Kudos to Jim Beloff and Herb Ohta for "Soup Du Jour". That was the highlight of the album. I do want to acknowledge, Cali Rose's "Home Is Where I Set My Tushie Down". It is a tune with cute lyrics and a meaning that is inspirational.

This CD was a very nice mix of tunes and styles. If you like upbeat, positive, happy songs, this CD is for you..

Digital Recording Pitfalls

Have you ever heard a digital recording that sounded flat and lifeless? How about one that is just plain loud? How about muddy vocals and bass that reverberates and drowns out everything else? Ah, the pitfalls of digital recording.

Digital recording can sound amazingly clear and clean, or it can sound terrible, it all depends on the mix.

Okay, generalities can get me in trouble, so I'd better clarify that before Arch Larizzo comes unglued, goes online, and tells me to pull my head from the nether-regions.

It is true that a bad recording is going to sound lousy no matter what you do. So, getting the right levels requires some effort, a lot of trial and error, and like Arch, a good ear and attention to detail.

There is a tendency to record music somewhat hot, then to add lots of compression in the mix and maybe a little more reverb. Then cranking the "master limiter" can make matters even worse.

If you follow the advise given on most digital recorder manuals, they tell you to record as hot as you can coming in, but avoid clipping. That really sounds good on paper, but, in practice, well, it takes practice, lots of practice.

Knowing what levels to use and



GOT UKE?



*You can find Kala Ukuleles at
www.ukeladymusic.com*



how to make sure you don't have hot-spots in the final mix is something very hard to teach. It takes a lot of working experience to find that perfect input volume and then do everything right in the mix.

Some digital recorders will record hot and mix at greatly reduced volume by design. I guess the theory is that you will kick up the volume when the project is mastered.

There is also the issue of recording with a multi-tracking system and dumping the files to your computer for the final mix, but the audio signal is so incredibly weak that you have to "normalize" it into oblivion or push it so far with the previously mentioned master limiter plugin that you have nothing but noise when you are done.

What you want in any mix, especially to a computer, is a great signal-to-noise-ratio. This is the measure of the signal strength compared to white noise that the volume produces when you have to crank things.

In a computer sound-card, a signal-to-noise-ratio of 95 db or above is pretty good with an analog setup. By that I mean, hooking a cable to a line input and actually recording the signal on your computer via the sound-card input. Some cards handle this well, but the signal might still remain too weak for a good finished project.

With digital recording being done more these days on computer systems, you need to

consider two things. First, the signal-to-noise-ratio must be favorable to record every track without added much noise because with each track you record you will be adding more noise. Think about that. Say you have a guitar or ukulele track. Add a lead guitar or uke. Add a bass. Add some percussion. Add a flute or some other instrument. Not only do you have noise, now there is five times the amount of noise than there was previously. Well, not exactly, but with each track you have added more white noise.

Suppose you have a sound-proof studio with a computer in an observation or engineering booth, exceptional quality mics, and nicely shielded cables. You plug the instruments straight into the recording gear. This is as clean as it can get. You have removed all ambient noise. The signal-to-noise-ratio turns out to be good. The sound is flat.

You add reverb. Guess what, that "digital signal processor" (DSP in abbreviated form) adds a ton of white noise and all of your careful preparation is for naught.

What's a fella to do? (or a lady for that matter)

If you can record with an hardware-based system, you want a way of moving your data directly to your computer's hard drive without having to run cables and actually "record" it anew. That will avoid generating noise on the input side of the computer. If you must record on the computer hard drive via

cable from a "mix-down" on an external recorder, then optical inputs are the best for the job. Be aware, though, that some cards, like the popular "Sound Blaster" from Creative Labs take your input signal and run it through a DSP, so, while that digital input is a 120 db signal-to-noise-ratio (which is awesome, by the way), you destroy all of your hard work by running it through the DSP unintentionally. Why Creative did that, I don't know, but they did. To be fair, they designed their cards for output and computer gamers, not recording studios. They are great at what they were designed to do.

If you can take your recorder, for example, a Zoom H4, remove the storage media (in our example, the SD card), place it in your computer's card reader and drag the files straight to your hard drive, you will not add any more noise and your project will sound great.

At that point, I mix the whole project with MixCraft 4.5 and use the master-limiter as judiciously as possible. Yes, it will amplify any noise in the initial recorded data, but, to get the volume, there are lots of trade-offs.

If you record from a DAW, a digital audio workstation hooked to a PC or MAC, the signal-to-noise-ratio must be 95 db or higher. You also must be sure that your computer has full-duplex hardware support... but that is an article for another day. Good Luck.



Ohana CK-25

In the budget end of the ukulele spectrum there are not too many solid mahogany ukuleles that perform like the Ohana CK-25. Ohana has a winner here.

The CK-25 is a concert-bodied uke constructed of solid mahogany. It has a matte finish, painted rosette, rosewood fretboard, rosewood overlay on the headstock, rosewood bridge, and a bone nut and saddle. Equipt with very light friction tuners, this ukulele is a pleasure to hold and play.

I love the sound of a solid mahogany uke and this one is a great player. The action was pretty nice as it came from the factory and the frets were perfectly dressed. The Aquila strings sounded great.

I expected to see a little rough edge here or there, a compromise in performance in order to reach the budget price that Ohana gives to this uke, but there were no rough spots. There were no blemishes. There seemed to be no compromises whatsoever. This uke is a solid performer.

The friction tuners are nice quality and the uke tunes easily and holds tune well. They look

really great, too, and they are very light weight.

There are no fancy inlays and no frilly things on this uke. It is a simple, clean design. The finish is just enough to protect the wood. The fit of every seam is excellent and the dimensions of this ukulele make it very comfortable to play.

When I started playing it, the sound was fantastic. This uke is loud, but it is smooth. It is not harsh and that is important to me. I recorded a tune in my studio and loved the sound quality. The uke was one track among many and its voice was not buried under the guitars, bass, drums and vocals. You could hear this little Ohana uke clearly.

I recorded it with a CAD M-177 microphone. This is a nice studio condenser mic. I was very pleased with the input levels and the uke did not need any tweaking to get good tone.

What I have found with budget ukuleles recording acoustically is that there is a tendency to go from dull to harsh signal with little room for error. That is not a problem with a ukulele that projects sound well. In this respect, the CK-25 is a great



design and perfect for performing on stage at a mic.

This is a basic uke. No frills, but plenty of thrills. It sounds fantastic and at a budget price, the CK-25 is one of Ohana's best offerings. Every player should have one in their stable.

The Ohana CK-25 is a great uke for pros and students alike.



Kala Ukes KA-FMC

Kala Ukes has a large assortment of interesting models. This issue's feature uke is the KA-FMC. It is a concert sized uke with a spalted maple back and sides and a solid spruce top.

The uke has a nice glossy finish that really shows off the spalted maple. This particular specimen also has a little bit of "curl" in the wood grain.

The spruce top has a nice tight grain and looks great in contrast to the sides of the body. The binding is natural-colored mahogany and adds a really classy touch to this uke.

The neck is very nicely shaped and comfortable. The fretboard and bridge are made of rosewood. The uke came with Aquila Nylgut strings on it.

This ukulele comes with sealed precision geared tuners. The tuning "buttons" are amber colored and suit the uke nicely.

I really like the high-gloss finish on this uke. It really shows off the beauty of the wood. The abalone rosette is looks great against the spruce top.

Simply put, this is a beautiful instrument.

The back and sides of this uke are laminated. That is typical of most any instrument made of maple. The construction is rugged and the uke feels veyr durable. I expected it to be a soft-voiced uke when I picked it up to test-drive.

What a pleasant surprise. This uke is loud. The tone is very pleasant. It is sweet on finger-picking numbers and has lots of energy on fast tunes when you want to give it a workout.

This uke has eighteen frets and plays beautifully all the way up the neck. The intonation is perfect and the uke stays in tune very well, thanks to the geared tuners.

Looking over the instrument carefully, I found that the finish was flawless and everything fits together perfectly. The binding is smooth and seamless. The maple neck reminds me of a Fender Telecaster guitar and plays about that fast. When I hold this uke in my hands, I want to rock! But it sounds so sweet that instead of rocking, I suddenly found myself playing "I'll See You In My Dreams" (the Joe Brown version). I then played "Something" (George Harrison's classic song). This is a sweet-sounding ukulele.



As you can imagine, I play a lot of different ukuleles. I like many of them and find that most ukes have strong points and weak. Not this one. I really found this uke a pleasure to play and it sounds terrific.

Kala's KA-FMC is a great playing uke that is well-built and projects sound well. It looks great, sounds great. I recommend it.



Ukulele Jim's Authentic, Down Home Marital Aid a.k.a. "Snake Oil Music"

I first met Ukulele Jim online when he posted a song he wrote for his daughter. I was impressed then, and I am impressed now, with Jim's new CD. Just what the official name is, I can't really tell, so, I'll refer to it as "Ukulele Jim's".

First off, I love the cover art. Here is the songlist:

1. Something About You
2. The Town At the End of the World
3. Dance With Me
4. Miss Mischief
5. Honey Wine
6. Hold On To Me
7. Imagine
8. The Ocean Song
9. The Cliche Song
10. Slow Down
11. Fear
12. Anniversary Song
13. My Love
14. Madeline

"Something About You" is a song that celebrates the little things people find the love about each other. It is the unspoken love that means so much.

"The Town At the End of the World" is a tune that sounds very "Irish". It is about the pace of life and how people find that time has just slipped through their fingers.

"Dance With Me" sounds like it

came from a Disney flick. I love the upbeat tempo and the clapping. The marimba is a nice addition. This song is really catchy. I love it.

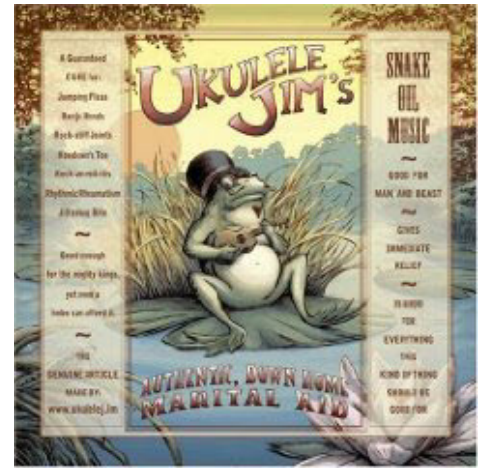
"Miss Mischief" is a cute song. I love the accents played in the background. Listening to the lyrics, I thought Miss Mischief was possibly a little girl, nope, later in the song, it seems that she's the girlfriend or wife. That's a cute little twist.

"Honey Wine" has a nice little intro and the percussion is great. I like the woodblock and snare. The backup vocals are really nice on this song. I love the vintage jazz vibe on the lead vocal near the end of this tune.

"Hold On to Me" has an old country or folk melody that is reinforced by the violin, played along with the vocals. The arrangement is nice. The banjo also adds to the flavor of this song. This is classic country.

"Imagine" is the John Lennon tune. This is a pretty good cover.

The next tune is "The Ocean Song" and begins with the sound of the ocean. It has a solid meter and the melody is



textbook. Nice little song. I grew up along the ocean, so, this song speaks to me.

"The Cliche Song" follows. I love the beat and melody of this song. This is a great melody. Followed by "Slow Down" which uses a cliché to make a point of slowing down and stop "running" through life. Ironically, the song is up-tempo. Nice snare work.

"Fear" is about the distraction of "things" and insecurity. This song is followed by "Anniversary Song" and that is perfect placement.

"My Love" is a song about love, life, and dreams. This song is about hopes, dreams, and expectations. The drum beat drives the song and the backup vocals are very well placed. The song is smooth and the melody flows. I like this melody. There is a distorted guitar near the end that was unexpected.

"Madeline" is the final track. It starts with a nice little intro. This is a classic strum. It's a good way to wrap up the album. This is a great melody.

Ukulele Jim, I enjoyed it. Good playing, good vocals. Nice.



Miss Jess & Friends Jammin' At Jackson's

Miss Jess is an energetic performer. If you don't know her you want to spend some time checking out her MySpace page and watching her performance videos. Jess is also known as "Mustang" and after watching the videos, you'll know why. I'll just say this, she has the spirit of a wild horse and she can steal the heart of any cowboy when she sings him a song.

Jammin' At Jackson's is an EP recorded at "Jacksons" with some of the best musicians down Texas Way.

The band lineup is as follows:

Miss Jess on ukulele and vocals. Pops Bayless on tenor uke, Rob Jewett on string bass, Jimmie Dreams on acoustic guitar, and Evan Kolvoord on harmonica.

These guys have played with some of the best pickers in the Southwest and Pops has been known around the ukulele scene for a long time, most recently in Shorty Long along with Miss Jess.

Miss Jess comes from a musical family. Her brother has played with some big-time acts and lends his guitar hand on this CD.



Between Pops and Jimmie Dreams (Jess brother), well, Jess says they are like one big family.

That makes for a tight little band and a fun recording.

This was recorded "live" which means they assembled on stage and started to record. Plain and simple, there are no studio tracks here, this is just roll 'em and play it, boys.

The song list begins with "Texas Woman Song. It's a little ditty about being a Lone Star Lady and everything that entails. Boot stompin' whiskey drinkin' scootin' on the dance floor, sexy, sultry, smart as a whip and can sting as much if your cross her the wrong way. I'll bet it's a local favorite.

"Yonder" sounds like classic country or old western music complete with harmonica. I get the mental image of a gal in a saloon singing on a stage while

the cowboys come and go.
Give me whiskey... hold the ice.

"Sparks Fly" has almost a Samba beat. I like the flavor of this song. It was made for Miss Jess. The musicianship is excellent and the meter is rock solid. Sounds like the strijng bass is played with a bow for part of this tune. The vocals come in after a little interlude and Pops picks that tenor uke flawlessly.

"Finally Mine" is another song that sounds like it came from a CanCan theatre. This is another perfect tune for Miss Jess. She has a vintage vibe on this one that I really like. The lead break is very nice.

"Philadelphia" sounds like a 1920s or early 30s tune. I picture a Clara Bow like babe dancing and kicking up her heels.

Miss Jess & Friends made a nice little CD, but it's too short. You left me wanting more, and that's a good thing. Thumbs's Up





<http://www.ukulelecosmos.com> - excitement, music, lively discussion, and a whole lot more...

Who'da Thunk It?



Am I seeing what I think I'm seeing? Yes, I am! This picture (above) is an unexpected duo. This is the rocker Robert Plant with bluegrass gal Alison Krauss. And Robert Plant is holding a Lanikai baritone ukulele.

It turns out, Robert Plant and Alison Krauss have made a CD together. Titled "Raising Sand", the album features sweet vocal harmonies and music that you'd never anticipate hearing from the lead singer of Led Zeppelin.

This album was nominated for FIVE GRAMMY AWARDS!

They won all five, including "Album of the Year".

I never thought I'd see the day... This album is on my list of things to buy when I get a chance to listen to it. This one deserves an album review.

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Rest In Peace...

A nineteen-year-old member of Ukulele Underground, "Captain Google", whose real name was Vincent Daniel Rooney, died of complications arising from Muscular Dystrophy on July 6, 2009 and the friends he had made online came together, under the guidance of UU moderator, Seeso, to create a video memorial.

"Captain Google" was always a valued contributor and part of something bigger than himself. In fact, he never really mentioned that he struggled with MD. Most of his online friends never knew that he had MD, so, news of Vincent's death came as a complete shock.

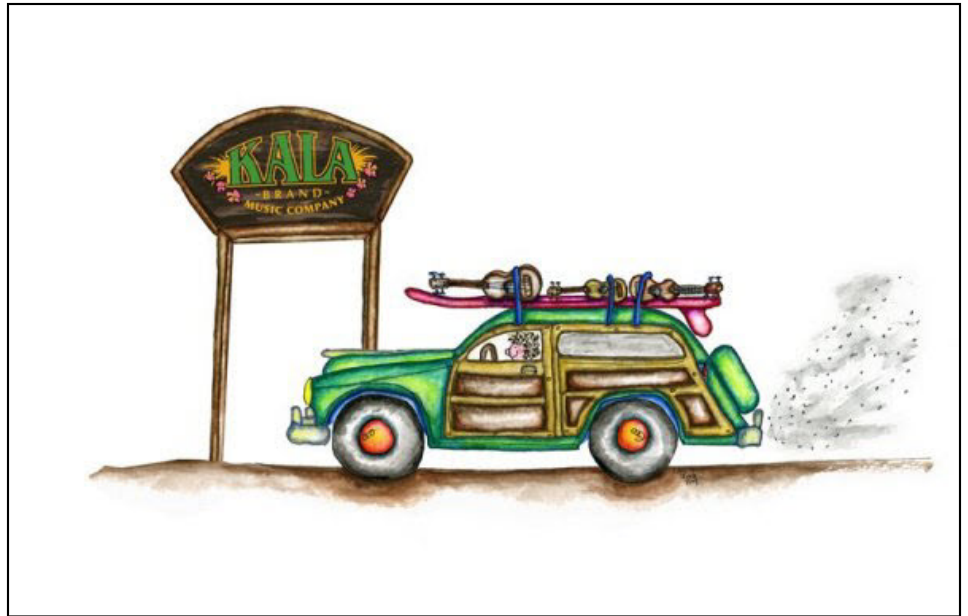
Here is a link to the video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bZknGc7eDml>

Sorry about the size. I needed to make an unbroken link. If you copy and paste it into your browser you should be able to watch the video.

No one can replace Vincent, and he won't be forgotten. This video speaks volumes. It is not only a testament to Vincent, it shows what a community of people with a common bond, in this case a little four-stringed musical instrument, the ukulele, can do. It also shows how a tool, like the internet, can be used to forge friendships and help people stay connected globally.

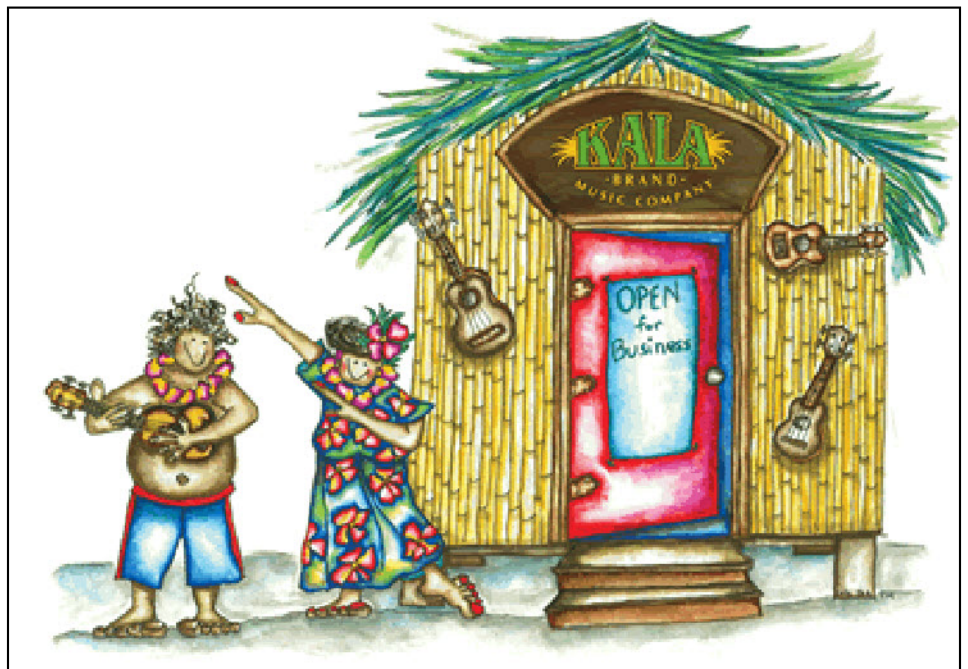
Rest in Peace, Captain Google.



GOT UKE?



*You can find Kala Ukuleles at
www.ukeladymusic.com*





Mike DaSilva World-Class Luthier

If you have not heard of luthier Mike Dasilva, well, you have now.

Mike is one of those "world-class luthiers", an elite group of expert craftsmen that totally hand-build musical instruments that seem to have a life of their own. The samurai believed that the

of the swordsmith was passed into the katana and wakesashi, the long and short sword of those legendary warriors. The bushido masters believed that the sword had a soul of its own and that every generation of warrior passed some of his soul along with his blade to the next generation. And so it has been



Mike DaSilva with Bosko & Honey

said of Stradivari and his violins. His instruments are the stuff of legends, a prized possession that would be passed from one generation to the next. Each player adding his or her part to the soul that the luthier built into the instrument.



Having admired Mike's work for a long time, I wanted to do a luthier spotlight featuring his work. The ukulele on the previous page is a "Santo" reproduction. This is just the sort of instrument that only a world-class luthier could create.

Catching up with Mike and getting him away from the work bench long enough for an interview was tricky. You know that a craftsman loves what he is doing when it is that hard to get him to set down his tools and take time to answer a few questions. Well, Mike agreed to be interviewed and I am pleased to have the opportunity to include it in this issue.

If you have been to the Ukulele Safari, Bosko & Honey's website, and watched some of the wonderful videos that have available, chances are really good that you have heard one of Mike's ukuleles and never knew it. Bosko & Honey play Mike's ukes.

Spend some time at Mike's website when you get the chance. You will love the gallery of ukuleles.

<http://www.ukemaker.com/>

Q: How many ukuleles have you made to date?

A: I number my ukuleles when the bodies are completed. As of July 29, 2009 the latest number is #207. So, I am easily approaching 200+ ukuleles completed.

Q: When did you first start

making ukuleles?

A: I completed my first ukulele in February 2004. It took me over two months. Of course, a lot of that time was spent building jigs, figuring out how to build them efficiently and making and correcting my mistakes. In the next two months, I managed to complete four more ukuleles that I brought to Uke Fest West in April 2004, in Santa Cruz, set up a small table, sold 3 of them and got my first custom order.

Q: Have you made any other musical instruments?

A: Nothing else really except for a Saga bluegrass banjo kit that I assembled in the late 1970's.

Q: I know that Warren Buffett has one of your ukes, as did John King. James Hill has a custom-made tenor, Bosko & Honey also have one of your ukes. What other "celebrity uke players play DaSilva ukes?

A: I like to think that all players of DaSilva ukes are automatically celebrities but seriously - the first well known ukulele artists that discovered my instruments were all the band members of the Boulder Acoustic Society. Aaron Keim, Kailin Yong, and previous member Brad Jones all own and regularly perform with a DaSilva uke. Aaron even has more than one. And as the members have changed, I also supply new ukes.

Scott McCormick has a special all black ukulele made with a fir top and primavera back and sides.

Michelle Kiba primarily performs with a DaSilva 6-string tenor and in addition to the tenor recently built for Honey, Bosko has a DaSilva concert and another ukulele is on order. For those familiar with Brook Adams of Eugene, Oregon, you will find that he plays a DaSilva Ukulele Carbon Fiber concert ukulele.

And there is the very special ukulele built for Pops Bayless of Austin, Texas. The top is old-growth redwood from sunken logs recovered from a Northern California river. These recovered logs may have been felled in the 1850's. The ukulele is decorated in a "Gambler's" theme with ivory dice, silver wire rosette, and lucky "seven" mother-of-pearl inlays.

All these ukuleles can be seen on the DaSilva Ukulele Co. website.

Q: You have both wood and abalone inlay on your ukes. I see a lot of marine life themes in them. Is it coincidence or is that by design?

A: Most of the ukuleles I have built are custom orders. The themes and specific decorations are generally a result of a collaborative effort with the buyer. Given the Hawaiian origins of the uke, many of my customers do prefer nature and specifically marine themes. A favorite theme of course is to include a "Honu" or sea-turtle in the decoration.

Q: I see an assortment of ukulele sizes and exotic woods

used in the ukes on your website, for the readers... what sizes and woods are available when ordering a DaSilva ukulele?

A: The following sizes and body designs are currently available:

13" scale length - Santo and Dias reproductions. These two body designs are exact reproductions of ca. 1890 ukuleles. In making these reproductions, I try to copy the decorative aspects that are trademarks of these first ukulele builders. I generally build the Santo with a spruce top and koa back and sides, or with an all koa body. The Dias model usually gets a salvaged, vertical-grain fir top and koa back and sides. Special features on these instruments include Spanish cedar necks, trademark peghead shapes, hand-made rope binding including a very unique 4-color, 4-wood rope binding.

13.65" scale soprano - I use this body for my standard Martin styled sopranos as well as my reproductions of vintage Martin Style 3 koa (3K) and mahogany (3M) ukuleles. In addition to the traditional koa and mahogany wood choices, I have built these sopranos with spruce, cedar, fir, redwood and carbon-fiber tops and a wide variety of back and side woods, including koa, mahogany, walnut, ziricote, ebony, rosewood, maple, and purpleheart.

13.75" scale soprano - Santo inspired body design. I use this body to suggest it's Hawaiian

heritage. It has very round bouts and I like to build these models with an all koa body or combine a spruce top with a variety of exotic back and side woods.

13.75" scale soprano pineapple body design. I have used primarily koa and bamboo for this design.

15.50" scale concert - Martin reproduction. This design is primarily used to make Martin Concert 3K reproductions.

15.50" scale concert - DaSilva Ukulele Co. body design. This is the body design used for most of my concert ukuleles. In particular, it is used as the basis for the recently announced "Hana Hou" Club uke. This production model includes an all koa body, Peghead 4:1 geared tuners, all the standard playability features of a custom DaSilva ukulele and an exclusive molded fiber-glass hard-shell case for the affordable price of \$650. [editor's note: that is an incredible price for this sort of build quality]

15.5" scale concert pineapple. This body also works for a 14-fret tenor design and has been used primarily for my "Honu" model.

17.0" scale tenor - Martin reproduction. Again, this design is primarily used to make Martin Tenor reproductions.

17.0" scale tenor - DaSilva Ukulele Co. body design. This body design is used for most of my custom tenor ukuleles. This

body design can be used with either a 12-fret or 14-fret to the body specification. This body design lends itself very well to a spruce or cedar top combined with koa back and sides. Of course, the buyer can choose from my very large stocks of exotic woods including a variety of rosewoods, ziricote, mahogany, highly-figured maple (fiddleback, quilted or birds-eye), walnut, mango, curly-mahogany, sapele, Macassar ebony, purpleheart, primavera etc.

17.0" scale tenor - Thin-Body. I have built several tenor ukuleles with my standard tenor shape but with the thickness of a soprano ukulele. This has resulted in instruments that are very loud, project well and have a clear tone without the tubbiness or hollow sound of a larger bodied tenor. This characteristic does lend itself very well to being amplified with an under-saddle pickup. The best instruments of this design have had either a spruce or carbon-fiber top.

20.25" scale baritone - Martin reproduction. Again, this design is primarily used to make Martin reproductions.

20.75" scale baritone - DaSilva Ukulele Co. body design. This baritone is usually built with a very deep cutaway and has been built primarily with an all koa body.

I primarily use genuine Honduras mahogany for my necks. For the Santo and Dias reproductions I use Spanish cedar.

Figured koa and maple are also possible neck woods.

Q: What is the "wait time" from order to delivery on a custom uke?

A: I do not maintain a long waiting list especially now as I am trying to build up an inventory of production models. But current wait-time for a custom ukulele is 2-4 months.

Q: Do you keep a few "standard" ukes around for immediate delivery?

A: Over the past five years I had not been able to keep much inventory of standard models for immediate delivery. I do hope to change that with my scheduling of the new production ukulele models.

Q: I don't see many ukes with electronics in them. When you do add a pickup, is there a preference as to what you use?

A: I primarily design and build my instruments as purely acoustic instruments. Many have installed electronics but for me the electronics are add-ons and may not be called out. When I do add a pickup, my current favorite is a Mi-Si Acoustic Trio or Align model with an under-saddle pickup (usually a LR-Baggs Element). The battery-less design is a great plus as it least affects my light body designs.

Q: I saw James Hill's custom-made DaSilva uke, was that cut-away design yours? It's rather unique.

A: The cutaway design is part of the collaboration with James Hill to provide him with the best acoustic sounding tenor possible. James has a unique picking style that requires getting under the 1st string on the upstroke. A normal cut-away design would provide the necessary clearance at the sweet spot but we both wanted to avoid any adverse sound affects caused by such a cut-away. The "James Hill" bevel design is a way to provide that picking clearance as well as easy access to the upper frets without giving up internal air volume while maximizing the area of the soundboard. The bevel component is borrowed from guitar designs that have the bevel on the large bout to soften the edge where a players arm rests.

Q: What pickup did you use for James Hill's uke?

A: We installed a Mi-Si Acoustic Trio pre-amp with an LR-Baggs under-saddle pickup.

Q: Carbon Fiber Ukes... I have only seen them on your website. How many have you built?

A: I have built 6 carbon fiber top ukuleles to date.

Q: How do the carbon fiber ukes compare to wooden instruments?

A: I began to experiment with carbon-fiber about three years ago. I wanted to explore the material to see if there would be any benefit to incorporating it in a ukulele. I quickly found

that working with carbon-fiber can be quite difficult due to the high-pressure and high temperatures needed to mold the material. And then I discovered carbon-fiber sheets and I began to wonder if it could be a substitute for the thin wooden soundboards. The characteristics of carbon fiber is such that it is 10 times as stiff as the stiffest spruce for a given thickness, but it is also 3 times as dense. Given that a high stiffness to weight ratio is desired for a soundboard, this meant that for an equivalent weighted carbon-fiber top I could possibly get a three times increase in the stiffness. My hope was this extra stiffness would provide a much more responsive top with an increase in overall volume. Very rough measurements do show an increase in maximum volume of over 10% for a carbon fiber topped ukulele compared to a spruce top. The tone is not as warm as a wood top, but the purity of tone and the immediate feedback from a carbon-fiber instrument lends itself very well to a be used with a pick-up. As mentioned earlier, I have used a carbon-fiber top on my thin-body tenor design with great success.

Q: Is the material cost competitive with exotic wood instruments?

A: The carbon fiber sheet material that I use is generally cost competitive with the highest-quality tonewoods such as spruce and koa. There is some additional work in using carbon-fiber for an instrument top as I must now use epoxy

adhesive for portions of my instrument construction.

Q: Do you still offer them?

A: Absolutely yes. The carbon fiber instruments are not for everyone but each of the owners of the ones I have built are quite happy with them.

Q: How long does it take to build a carbon fiber uke?

A: How does that compare to a finely crafted solid-wood instrument? Given that I am only substituting the carbon-fiber sheet for a wooden top the assembly of a carbon-fiber ukulele is not that different than my regular instruments. Again, the need for epoxy adhesive adds some complication and time to the process but it is not significant in relation to the total process of building a ukulele.

Q: You are the only luthier that I know of that also sells budget-priced ukes in the "shop". Did you sell ukes before you started building them?

A: Before I started building ukuleles, my interest in them was purely from a playing and collecting perspective. But since I started building them, due to the many people I have met, I have begun other ukulele adventures. My selling budget-priced instrument came about primarily through meeting Louis Wu of Long Beach, California a principal of Ohana Ukulele. I helped him open a few dealerships in the area and subsequently was able to offer Ohana ukuleles through my

shop. Having access to inexpensive ukuleles also has been helpful in my hosting of the Berkeley Ukulele Club. The club meets twice a month at my shop.

Q: Do you do any setup work on the budget ukes that people buy through your shop? What do you charge for a setup?

A: Any instrument purchased from me will be properly set up. There is no charge for such setup.

Q: What is the turn-around time on a setup?

A: From while-you-wait to next day.

Q: Do you have any future goals or plans in regard to ukuleles?

A: I recently announced designs and plans to produce and sell more standard models. This is partially in recognition of the tough economic times but I also hope to expand the number of instruments that I can produce each month and very much want to continue to offer hand-crafted high-quality instruments at a very affordable price.

Thanks for taking the time from your busy schedule, Mike. I really appreciate it.

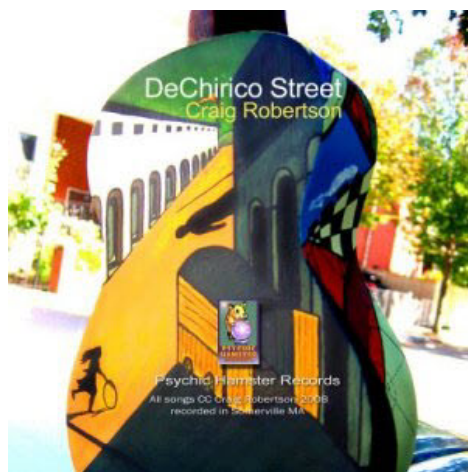
<http://www.ukemaker.com/>



<http://www.ukecast.com/mp3/>



<http://www.ukulelenoir.com/>



<http://psychichamster.com/>



UkeLounge DVD with Steven Sproat

UkeLounge with Steven Sproat is a "step-by-step guide to playing the ukulele". The DVD is not region-coded so it will work around the world. I ran it flawlessly on my laptop for the purpose of this review.

The DVD starts with the basics...

There is a brief orientation, if you will, that will introduce you to the "parts" of the ukulele, including frets, strings, tuners, etc.

Once you know your way around a uke, the lessons begin.

First is tuning the ukulele in traditional re-entrant gCEA. Next, Steven Sproat takes you through a few basic exercises that are designed to get your fingers moving independently.

Steven walks you through some basics before actually learning chords. He explains string numbering and fret placement. He then proceeds to explain the chord illustrations that experienced players all take for common knowledge. From there, it's on to playing chords.

Starting at "Lesson Five" Steven leads you through various strumming methods.

The DVD covers the basic strum, the triplet stroke, and the Hawaiian stroke. Then, there is a short practical application where you get to play a song.



Lessons resume with basic finger-picking. Then Steven teaches the "thumb roll" and moves to advanced strumming techniques with the Split Stroke followed by the Fan Stroke. Then he explains the Flamenco stroke.

Next, Steven takes the learner to yet another level with a more complex finger-picking method.

Steven ends the actual lessons with "Chord Inversions" and explains playing chords "up the neck" like many guitars do. This is an important lesson and many teachers never talk about it. When multiple people play together, Steven makes a point of mixing things up and making a song more interesting by playing in various chord

positions. Ukulele groups could really benefit from that lesson.

Along the learning path Steven takes you through practical applications by playing simple songs that help beginners understand the lessons.

The DVD is designed to teach players at every level. More advanced players can learn a few things by watching Steven when he demonstrates each technique. It is not what he says when he is playing, it is the little things, like the position of his fingers during the fan stroke, for example, when he explains how it works.

A ukulele newbie can learn a lot in a short time with this DVD. Everything is explained pretty clearly and nothing is assumed to be common knowledge. For the veteran player, you might just skip to the demonstrations and keep moving, but, if you watch carefully, there are enough pearls of wisdom there that even a veteran player can gain from this DVD.

Steven Sproat is one of the best ukulele strummers in the UK and, perhaps the world. For many people, this DVD may be as close as you can get to personalized instruction.

If you have an opportunity to attend one of Steven's seminars, by all means, set the date and go. Meanwhile, UkeLounge is a good tutorial, especially for beginners. I might have to give my wife some time with her ukulele and Sproatie Lad.

ukulele player and Kala present...

ukulele player and Kala Ukuleles came together to bring you this exciting opportunity. One lucky reader will win this ukulele.



All you have to do is submit your name, an e-mail address, and a shipping address so that if you are the winner, we will be able to ship it to you. You only need to submit your information one time and you will be in the running for all of the Kala Ukulele give-a-ways.

You read about the Kala KA-FMC ukulele in this issue of **ukulele player**, now, here is your chance to win it. Follow the instructions below...

We will not share your contact information with anyone for any reason.

note: if you have trouble with the form, e-mail your entry to giveaway@tricornpublications.com
Include name, shipping address, e-mail address.



Go to this website and fill in the form and click the submit button for your CHANCE to win. There is no purchase necessary. One submission per person will be counted. The lucky winner will be decided by a random number generator program. The contest entry cut-off date will be the 20th of every month of the current issue. The winner will be chosen on the 24th of that same month. The winner will be announced on Ukulele-Cosmos, Ukulele Underground, and Flea Market Music.

http://www.tricornpublications.com/uke_contest.htm

Thanks for reading **ukulele player**
and thanks to Kala Ukuleles for their support.



Ukulele Club Listings...

If you would like to list your club here, submit contact information at this website:

http://www.tricornpublications.com/uke_player.htm
 or e-mail me at this address:
mickey@tricornpublications.com
 We will add you to our list.

USA

Arizona

Scottsdale Strummers, Scottsdale AZ, Contact Pat McInnis
 weekly daytime meeting, monthly evening meeting
 email: pat@azukulele.com
 website: azukulele.com

California

Nuked Ukes

We are in Auburn California. Welcoming players from all levels.
 contact: Loyce Smallwood
loy@foothill.net
www.kahi.com/loyce'sblog

Ukulele Society of America

Contact: Richard Douglas
 (760) 458-6656
 300 Carlsbad Village Dr.
 Carlsbad CA, 92008
http://launch.groups.yahoo.com/group/ukulele_society_of_america

Ukulele Club of Santa Cruz

www.ukuleleclub.com

One of the Largest Ukulele clubs in America! Usually meets every third thursday at Bocci's celler in Santa Cruz, but check the website, cause it sometimes changes. Or email Andy@cruzio.com for club information.

Connecticut

The Ukulele Club of Southern Connecticut and the KookeeUkie Ukulele Band.



<http://www.wsukes.com>

German Village Music Haus

We Sell Ukuleles

expert setups for your fine
 ukuleles and guitars.

350 S. Grant Avenue
 Columbus, Ohio 43215

Bill Foley, owner and luthier.
www.gvmh.com
 (614) 228-8467
 email: info@gvmh.com

Ukulele Clubs continued

We welcome players of all skill levels and offer classes for those new to the ukulele. Check our web site at <http://www.orgsites.com/ct/uke-club/index.html>.

Pete Johnson

email=petejhnsn@sbcglobal.net

Florida

Tampa Bay Ukulele Society

www.meetup.com/tampabayukes

Each meeting will start with a group lesson followed by an informal jam session for players of all levels. Everyone gets a chance to call a few tunes.

Kansas (and Western Missouri)

Kansas City Ukesters

<http://www.kcuke.com>

Kentucky

Kentucky Ukes

meeting the fourth Sunday of every month

KentuckianaUkes@yahoo.com

Minnesota

StrumMn ukulele players

<http://strummn.nexo.com/>

New Mexico

The High Desert Sand Fleas

Meet the 2nd & 4th Thursday of each month at the

Albuquerque Press Club [6pm - 9pm]

2101 Highland Park Circle, Albuquerque, New Mexico - USA

contact: Stephen Hunt via email: hdsfgcea@gmail.com.

<http://sites.google.com/site/hdsfgcea/>

New York

Ukulele Club of Potsdam (New York)

meet-up every other Friday at 5PM at Tim's Comic & Game, 6 Main Street

contact: Tim Connolly tim@discoverpotsdam.com call: (315) 268-1598.

Loaner ukes available. Bring your uke and leave your cares at home!

Ohio

COUP (Central Ohio Ukulele Peeps)

coup@tricornpublications.com

Ukulele Clubs continued

South Carolina

Lowcountry Strummers Ukulele Club

Charleston, SC metro area. We meet twice a month. One beginner class and open Jam each month. All are Welcome.

www.lowcountrystrummers.com e-mail lowcountrystrummers@gmail.com

Texas

Robert S. Sparkman

sparky.judy@tx.rr.com

Lone Star Ukulele Club (in North Dallas)

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/lonestarukuleles>

The Dallas Ukulele Headquarters

Go to www.meetup.com and search The

Dallas Ukulele Headquarters to join the group. Lots of fun events and jams!

CHUG - Coffee House Ukulele Gang

Fort Worth, Texas

This wild west ukulele gang meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month.

Contact Steve for more info. (steve_w_williams@yahoo.com)

Vermont

Vermont Ukulele Society

email: vyhna@sover.net

Meets on the second and fourth Mondays of each month.

Washington

Seattle Ukulele Players Association (SUPA)

www.seattleukulele.org/

UK

England

Ukulele Society of Great Britain

43 Finstock Road, London W10 6LU

Tel: 020 8960 0459

Email: m@gjcman.com

Cambridge Ukulele Co-operative [Cuckoo]

Meet alternate Sundays 2pm-6pm

The Portland Arms Cambridge CB4 3BAIf

If you're cuckoo about ukes come and join us.

<http://www.myspace.com/cambridgeukuleleclub>

Ukulele Philharmonic Orchestra of Sudbury

Ukulele Clubs continued

Tuesdays evenings from 7.00pm
The Institute, Station Road, Sudbury Suffolk CO10 2SP
Beginners Welcome

Uke Wednesday Jam

Every Wednesday 7 till closing Downstairs @ The Royal George
Charing Cross Road, London, WC2H 0EA, U.K.
contact: Quinc email: qnc@qnciv.com
<http://ukeweds.intodit.com>

SCUPA - Second City Ukulele Players Association

We meet weekly on Tuesdays at 7:30pm in the upstairs room
at The New Billesley Pub, Brook Lane, Kings Heath,
Birmingham, West Midlands B13 0AB

We accommodate all players beginners to experienced.

Call or text Jon 0787 353 1161 or email:
jay.eyebigfoot.com for more information.

Stockton to Darlington Ukulele Express

Meeting monthly in Darlington, northeast England new members always
welcome. contact Simon at simonb250@hotmail.com
<http://ukuleleexpress.blogspot.com>

Whickham & District Social Club

Simonside View, Whickham, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE16 4AQ.
We meet every 2nd Wednesday 7:30 PM to 9:30 PM.
<http://tunearmy.blogspot.com/>

UkeGlos Ukulele Club

Meets on first & third Mondays every month, 8.00pm at The Strand Wine Bar,
40 High St, Cheltenham, Glos.

Wooden & banjo ukes welcome. All levels of playing ability & song styles. **For full details visit: www.ukeglos.co.uk**
<http://www.ukeglos.co.uk>

Ukulele Sundays host:Tim Smithies

email: tim@timsmithies.com
I host a Ukulele Jam session on Sunday evenings in Sheffield UK called 'Ukulele
Sundays' All welcome - 8.30pm onwards. Riverside Cafe Bar.
<http://www.ukulelesundays.co.uk>.

"Brighton ukulele Sundays"

Meet first Sunday of the month at the Brunswick Pub in Hove East Sussex UK.
Visit Facebook Brighton Ukulele Sundays for more details.

Ireland

UKULELE IRELAND

ukulele@ireland.com

Irish ukulele club meets on the second saturday of
each month.Players from all over Ireland. Ukeplayers of all levelswelcome. If

Ukulele Clubs continued

you are a visiting uke player please feel free to come along. The meetups are held at 2, eden park, Dunlaoire, Co. Dublin.

Scotland

Monday Ukearist

Edinburgh's very own ukulele gathering. We gather once a fortnight on Mondays from 7 to 10(pm!) at Mackenzie School of English near the foot of Leith Walk

6 John's Place,
EH6 7EP

Contact: John Hobson, +44 (0)7940 513969, jhobson@gmail.com
<http://ukearist.co.uk>

South Wales

Ukulele Nights

meet on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of every month at 8.30pm.
The Albion, Glebe Street, Penarth, Vale of Glamorgan, South Wales

Contact: Sarah Thomas: sarahredsedge@yahoo.co.uk.
Blog: www.ukenights.blogspot.com
(for songbooks, directions and more. Beginners very welcome)

Germany

Ukulele Club of Germany

info@ukulelenclub.de
www.ukulelenclub.de (home page)
www.ukulelenboard.de (message board)

Deutscher Ukulelenclub

c/o Raimund Sper
Korneliusstrasse 1
D-47441 Moers
tel. +49/2841-394837
fax + 49/2841-394836
www.ukulelenclub.de

Holland

Ukulele Jamboree in Rotterdam - hosted by 'The Uke Box'

The night is comprised of a workshop, performances & open mic.
To Join the Mailing List send an e-mail to: guaranteed2swoon@gmail.com

To read more about this and our other ukulele projects go to:

<http://www.ukulele-interventie.blogspot.com> (Dutch)

Visit my personal blog spot and click on 'Ukulele' under "Contents" (English)

<http://www.shelleyrickey.blogspot.com>

Ukulele Clubs continued

Note: Shelley has an Etsy store where you can find ukulele related items for sale, check it out: <http://www.thejumpingfleaemarket.etsy.com>

France

Ukulele Club of Paris

Thursday starting 7:30 PM

Meetings are announced on the website King David Ukulele Station at this URL:

<http://www.ukulele.fr>

C.O.U.L.E.

Club Olympique de Ukulélé de Lille et des Environs

<http://www.COULE.fr>

"Stay cool, come and play with the C.O.U.L.E."



USA

Lone Star Ukulele Festival

dates are 4/30-5/2 in Dallas

UkeLadyMusic and The Dallas Ukulele Headquarters are organizing the event.

more information coming soon.

Hawaii State Society of Washington, DC

Oct 9-11, 2009.

Herb Ohta, Jr. and Keale are the ukulele players that we are featuring as the ukulele instructors.

UK Ukefest

July 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th 2009

Run Cottage

Hollesley

Suffolk IP12 3RQ

more information available soon on

www.ukulelecosmos.com/phpBB2/index.php

London Uke Festival And World Record Smash!!!

Calling All Uke players! All ages and abilities, 1000 Uke players in an afternoon of entertainment with bands, food, drink, very special guests and a charity money raising World Record attempt!!

Devonshire Square, London EC2.

contact Quincy at qnc@qnc.tv

20th June: Noon till 6pm,

France

Paris ukulele Festival

Le 4 juillet 2009 / July 4th 2009 "La Bellevilloise"

<http://www.myspace.com/parisukefest>

infos@parisukefest.com



Making beautiful music is your passion, helping you do it is ours.



This year edition will happen on July 4th with :
Kelli Rae Powell (USA) www.myspace.com/kelliraepowell
Tim Sweeney (USA) <http://www.timsweeney.us/>
Elvira Bira (Sweden) www.myspace.com/elvirabira

Ukulele Zaza (Belgium) www.myspace.com/ukulelezaza

Marie Darling (France) www.myspace.com/mariedarling
Patti Plinko and her Boy (UK)
www.myspace.com/pattiplinkoandherboy
Les Ukulélé Boyz (France) www.myspace.com/ukuleleboys47

Vonck and Vlam

touring from Holland to Istanbul - this summer...
www.vonck-vlam.eu
Check out the Website... that's great entertainment!

WORLD MUSIC DAY at Auburn Preserve Park

from Noon to 5pm June 20th. No fee. Join us for fun: For Festival Info contact:
NUKED UKES
loy@foothill.net

Announcing a new Meetup for The Tampa Bay Ukulele Society!

What: Tampa Bay Ukulele Society presents "open mic"
at New Harmony Coffee & Tea
When: August 29, 2009 2:00 PM
Where:
New Harmony Coffee & Tea
1949 Drew Street
Clearwater, FL 33765



Essential Links from the World-Wide-Web

UkeTalk - <http://uketalk.com/links.html>

"Ukulele Spoken Here" is one phrase that comes to mind. If you want to talk ukulele or catch all the news that is news, this is a can't miss website.

Brudda Bu's Ukulele Heaven

<http://www.geocities.com/~ukulele/index.html>

If you'd like to learn the history of some of ukulele's greatest players, this site is absolutely essential.

Ukulelia - <http://www.ukulelia.com/>

The World's Greatest Ukulele WebLog" Need I say more?

Ukulele Cosmos - <http://www.ukulelecosmos.com>

One of the hottest ukulele forums on the web. Don't Miss It!

Ukulele Underground

<http://www.ukuleleunderground.com/forum/index.php>

Another really popular ukulele forum, lots of Hawaiian players and folks from the West Coast of the Mainland USA.

Flea Market Music - <http://www.fleamarketmusic.com/default.asp>

This is Jumpin' Jim Beloff's website. He has lots of great resources and an excellent forum as well. You can buy Flukes and Fleas there, too. Jim also has lots of songbooks, DVDs, and other great stuff there.

UkeLadyMusic - <http://www.ukeladymusic.com/>

Auntie Noel runs a really great shop. Her passion is ukulele and it shows.

Contact Us: phone 214-924-0408

or email noel.tardy@yahoo.com

Kiwi Ukulele

New Zealand's Ukulele Companion

<http://www.kiwiukulele.co.nz/>

Bounty Music

<http://www.ukes.com/>

Bounty Music Maui

111 Hana Hwy. #105

Kahului, Maui, HI 96732

open 9 :00 to 6:00 Monday thru Saturday * Sunday 10:00 to 4:00

Phone: (808) 871-1141

Fax: (808) 871-1138

German Village Music Haus

We Sell Ukuleles

expert setups for your fine
ukuleles and guitars.

350 S. Grant Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Bill Foley, owner and luthier.

www.gvmh.com

(614) 228-8467

email: info@gvmh.com



<http://www.ukecast.com/mp3/>

Online Resources

<http://www.tikiking.com>

tikiking@tikiking.com

comment=Website listing:

Home of Tiki King Ukuleles since 1999. lots of neat Ukulele stuff, such as the webs largest Ukulele makers database, Custom Hand Built Tiki King Ukuleles, and ukulele stuff to see and buy. We have Flukes and Fleas, Ukulele Art Gallery, Ukulele classes, chord charts, CD's and more!

Bonsai Garden Orchestra

email: info@bgo.nu

Webside: <http://www.bgo.nu>

MySpace: <http://www.myspace.com/bonsaigardenorchestra>

World Music Festival "glattundverkehrt" on july 22nd .

www.glattundverkehrt.at

UkePics

Assorted Ukulele Picture Exposé

<http://www.ukepics.com/>

How High The Moon Publishing

Publisher of the Jam Book "Play Well with Other"

9826 James A. Reed Rd. Kansas City, MO 64134

816-965-0183 or 816-728-6936

<http://www.moonbookstore.com>

Uke Farm - <http://www.ukefarm.com/home.HTML>

Uke Farm Radio - <http://www.live365.com/stations/ukefarm>

GoChords

<http://www.gochords.com>

"GoChords™ is an easy-to-use writing and playing tool with moveable chord tablature!"